DL Anderson nominated:

*I Am Malala* (2013)  
by Malala Yousafzai

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. *I Am Malala* is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls’ education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person’s voice to inspire change in the world.

James DeLayo nominated:

*The God Delusion* (2008)  
by Richard Dawkins

In his sensational international bestseller, preeminent scientist and outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins delivers a hard-hitting, impassioned, but humorous rebuttal of religious belief. With rigor and wit, Dawkins eviscerates the arguments for religion and demonstrates the supreme improbability of the existence of a supreme being. He makes a compelling case that faith is not just irrational but potentially deadly ... This brilliantly argued, provocative book challenges all of us to examine our beliefs, no matter what beliefs we hold.

Carol Durst-Wertheim nominated:

*How to Make an African Quilt* (2013)  
by Bonnie Lee Black

In her story of making an African quilt, the author takes the reader along with her to Mali, where she stands at the crossroads of history, her own life choices, hopes for the future and the challenges of daily life in an Islamic/French/Ancient Nation of Learning. She weaves through this a fiction of a slave woman brought to the USA in the mid-19th century, using her own sewing and fabric skills to survive and communicate her own culture and identity to those who come after her.
Lea Fridman nominated:

*The Good Lord Bird* (2013)
by James McBride

A masterwork of linguistic ingenuity and imaginative breadth and depth, it is about John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry which contributed to the beginning of the Civil War. It is a brilliant portrait of slavery, perhaps more accurate than any historical rendering yet... It is told from the perspective of a slave child who becomes attached to Brown and his group... The language is utterly convincing and the portrait of Brown and of America on the cusp of a race war, incredibly timely.. In looking at America's darkest evil, he salvages the good, the true and the beautiful even as Brown, with federal complicity, hangs.

Michael Goldstein nominated:

*Escape From Camp 14* (2013)
by Blaine Harden

*Escape From Camp 14* is a brutal account of one man's odyssey from a North Korean labour camp to freedom in the West We get no further than the second chapter... a story of life inside a North Korean gulag, before a six-year-old girl is beaten to death. ...Written by Blaine Harden, a former foreign correspondent for the Washington Post, after seven interviews spanning two years. ...As [Shin] said earlier this year in an interview with the Financial Times, all he wants to do now is to erase his memories. "I do not want to think about the past any more." This is a fantastic book. Totally engaging and truly gripping. Our students will not put it down once they pick it up.

Vincent Gravelli nominated:

*Mr. Wolf V. The Three Pigs* (2013)
by Marie Guillaume & William Guillaume

Lawyers and others who have read *Mr. Wolf v. The Three Pigs* have dubbed it the legal version of *Animal Farm*. The famous tag line "all animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others" aptly describes how Mr. Wolf feels as he takes on the system he feels has unjustly labeled the wolves. This legal satire tackles some heavy issues such as prejudice, the legal system, sibling rivalry, the media, and class in a humorous, but educational way. *Mr. Wolf v. The Three Pigs* is 212 pages of drama that will keep you in stitches until the very last page.

Goldy Landau nominates:

*Unorthodox* (2010)
by Debra Feldman

*Unorthodox* is a captivating story about a young woman determined to live her own life at any cost. The Satmar sect of Hasidic Judaism is as mysterious as it is intriguing to outsiders. In this arresting memoir, Deborah Feldman reveals what life is like trapped within a religious tradition that values silence and suffering over individual freedoms. The child of a mentally disabled father and a mother who abandoned the community while her daughter was still a toddler, Deborah was raised by her strictly religious grandparents, Bubby and Zeidy. Along with a rotating cast of aunts and uncles, they enforced customs with a relentless emphasis on rules that governed everything from what Deborah could wear and to whom she could speak, to what she was allowed to read. I believe this book will make students appreciate that they are in school and the support they receive from their family and community etc and not take their lives for granted.

Elaina Olynciw nominated:
Lost Everything (2012)
by Brian Francis Slattery

Lost Everything is about a riverboat journey, a story of a man named Sunny Jim trying to get to his young son, Aaron, in the midst of a battlefield. America is in ruins, devastated by the storms and disasters brought on by climate change, and a war brought on by economic and political collapse. Instead of dealing with the scope of a broken nation, Slattery narrows his vision to the banks of the Susquehanna River and the small towns and rural routes just beyond. Sunny Jim and his faithful traveling companion, the Reverend Bauxite, are two men on a mission, searching for home and family, the only things left in a world that is no longer recognizable as it once was. I would hope that our students will be brought to the awareness that we cannot sit back and allow the inevitable destruction of our environment, of our future and our children's futures. The post-apocalyptic country that the novel takes place in is not too far-fetched. It can become a reality. I would also like the students to share the optimism shown in the novel that humans are survivors and will help each other even in a time that seems to have no future.

Caterina Y. Pierre and Suella Vainstein both nominate:

by Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn

A book by the husband-wife team of Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. The book argues that the oppression of women worldwide is "the paramount moral challenge" of the present era, much as the fight against slavery was in the past. It offers a view on the oppression that currently exists as well as women's ability to end it. Pulitzer Prize winners Kristof and WuDunn undertake an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, the authors depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope. The book would help our community learn how different countries are meeting such challenges as public education and human trafficking in a work of journalism at its finest. This book has inspired a world wide civic engagement initiative.

Paul Ricciardi nominated:

Just Kids (2010)
by Patti Smith

JUST KIDS begins as a love story and ends as an elegy. It is a salute to New York City in the late sixties and seventies, to its rich and poor, its hustlers and hellions. A true fable, it is a portrait of two young artists’ ascent, a prelude to fame. JUST KIDS begins with Patti Smith in her working-class poor upbringing, through a teen pregnancy, on through her exploration with art, poetry, writing, and music--with the backdrop of our beloved New York City. The book addresses the struggle to go after your dreams at all costs; climbing out of generational poverty; becoming an artist; the power of the arts. Ms. Smith’s example is inspiration to follow your dream, whether it is becoming a poet or a nurse. She is a living, New York City based multidisciplinary artist whose remarkably well-written, highly literary book would open possibilities for dramatic readings and a dramaturgical exhibit of NYC in the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s 3; a reading by Smith herself and/or a community "art fair" where young people would come to KCC for a day of art making with the author; an exploration of the challenges young adults face in NYC (using Ms. Smith's example); student poetry slams and open mics in honor of the style Smith crafted; radio shows chronicling the music and literature scenes in NYC during the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s; an exploration of that moment in US history, looking at the Civil, Women’s and Gay Rights movements arising at that time.

Frances Ruoff nominated:

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884)
Ernest Hemingway once claimed, “All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn.” The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is commonly named among the Great American Novels, the work is among the first in major American literature to be written throughout in vernacular English. It is told in the first person by Huckleberry Huck Finn, a friend of Tom Sawyer. It is a direct sequel to The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. The book is noted for its colorful description of people and places along the Mississippi River. Satirizing a Southern antebellum society that had ceased to exist about twenty years before the work was published, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is an often scathing look at entrenched attitudes, particularly racism. The New Riverside Edition edited by Susan K. Harris. ISBN 0-395-98078-x includes historical contexts and critical essays that are useful for additional discussions about themes covered by Twain.

Indira Skoric nominated:

Tiger’s Wife (2011)
by Tea Obreht

In a Balkan country mending from war, Natalia, a young doctor, is compelled to unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather’s recent death. Searching for clues, she turns to his worn copy of The Jungle Book and the stories he told her of his encounters with “the deathless man.” In this novel, the sometimes crushing power of myth, story, and memory is explored in this brilliant debut from Obreht, the youngest of the New Yorker’s 20-under-40. Natalia Stefanovi, a doctor living (and, in between suspensions, practicing) in an unnamed country that’s a ringer for Obreht’s native Croatia, crosses the border in search of answers about the death of her beloved grandfather, who raised her on tales from the village he grew up in, and where, following the German bombardment in 1941, a tiger escaped from the zoo in a nearby city and befriended a mysterious deaf-mute woman. The evolving story of the tiger’s wife forms one of three strands that sustain the novel. Obreht is an expert at depicting history through aftermath, people through the love they inspire, and place through the stories that endure; the reflected world she creates is both immediately recognizable and a legend in its own right. Obreht is talented far beyond her years, and her unsentimental faith in language, dream, and memory is a pleasure.

Enid Stubin nominated:

The Assistant (1957)
by Bernard Malamud

Morris Bober, an immigrant from Russia attempts to create a life for himself and his family in postwar Brooklyn. A series of disasters introduces him to Frank Alpine, a first-generation Italian-American, whose ambitions and yearnings mirror Morris’s own. Students will see in the book a portrait of human hope and heartbreak underlying the facile trajectory of the American dream, recognizing that New York—and Brooklyn in particular—has served as the backdrop for generations of immigrant ambition and yearnings. Malamud’s prose limns a harsh world of disappointment and dreams deferred that nevertheless offers a glimpse of incandescent realization: the potential for repentance and the regeneration of the human spirit.

Silvia Torres nominated:

In Defense of Food (2009)
by Michael Pollan

Pollan’s In Defense of Food starts: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." The book goes on to show how those few words, a seemingly simple guide to healthy eating, are difficult to understand and to practice. The book is divided into three parts: I. The Age of Nutritonism: Pollan introduces the ideology of "nutritionism" and explains that it has led to a focus on eating "nutrients" over eating what he calls "real food," foods that our ancestors would recognize as food. He explains how this thinking started, how it has supported trend diets and how producers of processed foods used it to their advantage. II. The Western Diet & Disease of Civilization: In this section, Pollan looks at how the Western Diet has affected the health of Americans, and increasingly, the rest of the world. He cites studies where
groups have moved to a Western diet and immediately developed the diseases that plague the Western world: cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity. Pollan goes on to discuss how industrializing our food production has changed the food foods we eat and how we think about them. III. Getting Over Nutritionism: Here, Pollan returns to the book's opening, "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Looking at each piece individually, he discusses how to move away from the Western Diet and begin a new relationship with food. I want students to have the tools to make educated decisions about the food they buy and eat. I want them to understand how and why diabetes and obesity have become such problems in the U.S. I want them to have the information to steer themselves, and their families, away from false claims of "nutritious" processed foods and toward whole foods.

Barbara Walters nominated:

*The Sound of Things Falling* (2013)
by Juan Gabriel Vasquez

Vasquez is as interested in generations, in collective experience, as he is in individual specimens of humanity. In this book's case, he’s particularly consumed with those who lived in Colombia, especially in its capital city of Bogota, during the 1980s: the years the city was terrorized by the ruthless and elusive drug lord Pablo Escobar. Antonio came of age in Bogota during this period, and he immediately recognizes others who did so. This novel’s plot, like a strand of DNA, twists slowly and has incremental steps, like a ladder. It won’t do to spoil the climb. At bottom it’s about what happens when Antonio meets a reclusive older man, Ricardo, who has served two decades in prison. They slowly become friends during games of billiards at a bar. One night, Ricardo is assassinated, and Antonio is shot and badly hurt. Antonio becomes obsessed with Ricardo’s life, and the book scrolls back to the 1960s and 70s, when Ricardo married Elaine, a young Peace Corps volunteer, and became involved, as a pilot, in the drug trade. His prose, in this translation by Anne McLean, is literate and dignified. Fetching images float past. This is a beautifully written novel that speaks directly to our times -- across generations and history -- revealing something to all of us about the unseen connections between past, present and future.

Kaitlyn Worth nominated:

*The Book Thief* (2007)
by Markus Zusah

This extraordinary #1 New York Times bestseller opens in movie theaters Nov. 15, 2013. Zusak’s unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul. It is 1939, Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can’t resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of I Am the Messenger, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time. This book is all about how powerful words are, how what you can say or write can affect so many people without your realization. I hope people take away that this book holds great importance to how humans are social creatures, and how empathy is one of the most important traits a person can have.

Book descriptions are excerpted from submitted nomination forms.

...Much thanks to all who took time out to nominate a book for next year’s program!